



Examinations Policy – Main School

Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College Main School appreciates the value of examinations for the following reasons:

- They provide an opportunity for recognising and confirming pupils' achievement.
- They inform departments and individual teachers on their performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses and providing comparison against recognised targets.
- They allow individual pupils to identify strengths and future targets.
- They provide information for parents on the performance of the child and the Main School
- Internal examinations provide practice for public examinations. These are referred to on Pre-public examinations.
- They encourage the following qualities in pupils: the development of retention and learning skills; the organisation of time and syllabus content for revision; the selection and application of knowledge, skills and techniques in unfamiliar contexts; the delivery of concise, relevant answers under the twin pressures of time and the awareness that much may be at stake.
- External examinations make possible entry into further education and certain types of employment.

Procedures and Rationale

Internal examinations

- They are planned and organised by the Examinations Officer in consultation with the Associate Headteacher and Executive Headteacher.
- All pupils undertake 'Pre Public Examinations (PPE's) in preparation for public examinations.
- Revision skills and examination preparation form part of the Raising Achievement Policy and are covered by individual subject departments.
- Absentees are normally encouraged to take internal examinations on their return to Main School if time and circumstances permit. For reasons of fairness, they are not normally permitted to do so before the actual examination date. These are done in after school activities.

External examinations

- They are organised by the school's Examinations Officer.

- Subject departments may choose their Awarding Body and syllabus in consultation with the Associate Headteacher responsible for the curriculum.
- Main school pupils are entered primarily for GCSE qualifications. Additionally, pupils may also be entered for BTEC (Level 2 Tech Awards), OCR Cambridge Nationals, NCFE awards and OCR Latin certificate qualifications. Particular pupils, depending on their learning needs and abilities, may be entered for Entry Level Qualifications in English, Maths and Science, and ASDAN (in discussion with Heads of Department, SENCo and Associate Headteacher).
- Special consideration is sought for pupils who have been disadvantaged by health problems or traumatic events such as death or serious illness in the family. Recognised learning difficulties known to the school (such as dyslexia) are also grounds for requests for access arrangements. Applications are made by the Examinations Officer in consultation with Pastoral Support and Associate Headteacher.
- Examination rooms are selected to provide a quiet atmosphere, adequate space and good working conditions.
- Full details of the arrangements for the conduct of public examinations are given to supervising staff.

Monitoring and review

- Procedures for the conduct of examinations are reviewed annually after examinations have taken place. This may lead, for example, to a change of designated examination rooms.
- Value added measures are applied through systems such as FFT Aspire. The results of pupils from certain target groups such as pupils with special educational needs, ethnic minorities or for whom English is an additional language are scrutinised. Any underperformance identified would lead to particularly close monitoring of pupils with similar backgrounds.

Examination arrangements

- Make sure that instructions to pupils and invigilators are clear. Particular emphasis is placed on the correct application of Access Arrangements during an examination, as well as ensuring pupils are sitting the correct tier examination paper.
- Ensure that there are spare papers in each set.
- Launch assembly with pupils about JCQ regulations is held every year by Associate Headteacher.
- Invigilators are recruited and trained as per the JCQ General Regulations.

College Policy on use of Word Processors in Examinations:

- Pupils will complete a formal assessment of their needs with SENCo to determine whether they are eligible for consideration for use of word processor as part of their Access Arrangements for examinations.

- This will be confirmed at the discretion of SENCo and Senior Leadership Team, and each pupil will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Main School Form Tutors

- Inform pupils about date, venue and length of examinations as early as possible. Pupils are issued with draft copies of exam timetables once examination entries have been completed (usually in February) for them to check over and for any issues or errors to be discussed.
- Each pupil will be issued with a second copy of his or her timetable that is to be placed in his or her homework diary, for reference. A further copy is sent home to parents/guardians by post. Additional copies can be made on request to the Examinations Officer.
- Go over instructions for pupils – this is also carried out in assemblies.

Starting examinations

- Candidates are registered as they enter the exam room by a member of the Leadership team.
- Associate Headteacher or member of Leadership will usually start the examination.
- Information about examination/revision times will be on the teacher's desk in exam rooms.
- Follow instructions on exam wrappers.
- Enter absentees' names on documentation.
- The exam begins with a prayer.
- **NOTE:** Private candidates are required to provide photographic identification.

Finishing examinations

- Pupils are dismissed from the examination room(s) by invigilators.
- Exam scripts are collected by invigilators and brought to the Examinations Officer.
- Scripts are checked against the register(s) and prepared for despatch by the Examinations Officer or an Examinations Assistant.
- Scripts are despatched by Parcelforce the same day in the first instance. Alternatively, they are despatched the next working day. Scripts are stored in the Exams Office secure storage until Parcelforce are on site to collect them.

During examinations

- Enforce procedures in pupils' instructions section
- Be vigilant for cheating. If it occurs, report it to the Examinations Officer as soon as possible. Warn the pupil but allow him or her to finish the paper
- Unless absolutely necessary no pupil should leave the examination room, supervising staff should use their discretion

- If it is deemed by the supervising staff that pupil must leave the examination they must be escorted and fully supervised by an accompanying adult whilst not affecting the correct ratio of supervisors to pupils in the examination room

College Policy on external candidates and private entries:

- The College offers private resit entries in GCSE Mathematics and English Language in the November examination series.
- Private entries are limited to current or former pupils and students of the College. Capacity issues mean we are unable to offer private entries to external candidates who have not been educated at the College.